DEMOCRATIC
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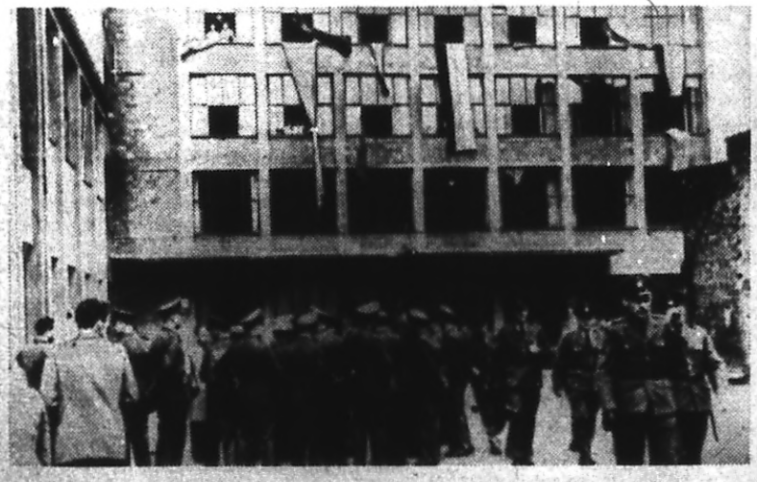
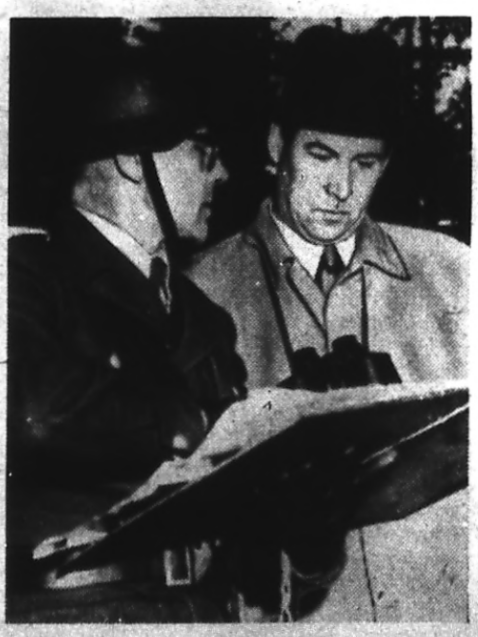
1933 - BAN No. ONE

On February 28th 1933 nazi police chief Goering (left) sent out his squads to raid Communist Party offices, arrest thousands of Communists. Here police raid the Berlin headquarters of the Communist Party

1956 - BAN No. TWO





On August 17th 1956 West German Minister of the Interior Gerhard Schroeder (right) former nazi storm trooper, sent out his squads to raid Communist Party offices, arrest hundreds of Communists. Here police raid the Dusseldorf headquarters of the Communist Party

THE BAN

By The Editor

In March 1933 Hitler banned the Communist Party in Germany: two months later he banned the Social Democratic Party and the free trade unions. Communists, Social Democrats and trade unionists, who had been stricken down separately, met again in the concentration camps.

In August 1956 Adenauer banned the Communist Party in West Germany: he did it more politely than Hitler, using a cloak of respectability and legality, but he too used the full force of the police to enforce the ban. So far he has taken no direct action against the Social Democrats and the free trade unions; but many members of these organisations are asking themselves today whether they will once again meet their Communist comrades and fellow workers in new concentration camps and prisons.

If Adenauer had studied the history books, he would have seen that Socialist and Communist movements have often been suppressed by German Governments in the past: they have always emerged from the underground stronger than before.

In 1852, the Prussian Government suppressed the Communist League, Germany's first socialist party, of which Karl Marx was a member. Twenty-five years later the re-formed Social Democratic Party had already won half a million voters.

In 1878, Chancellor Bismarck issued the "Socialist Laws", banning the Social Democratic Party. Twelve years later the party elected 35 members to the Reichstag, and soon became the strongest socialist party in the world.

In 1933 Hitler banned the Communist Party. Tens of thousands of Communists were killed, but the party never gave up the fight. 12 years later, Communist and Social Democratic survivors of the Hitler terror joined in East Germany in the Socialist Unity Party, today the most important party in the German Democratic Republic.

And in 1956, Chancellor Adenauer banned the Communist Party in West Germany. But the Party lives and will go on fighting.

* * *

The most fitting comment on Adenauer's action was given by "Arriba", organ of the Spanish Phalangist Party:

"We greet the courageous deed of the German leader. In future the name of Adenauer will be named in one breath with the name of our beloved Generalissimo Franco, the wise defender of the western world."

MONSTER TRIAL REACHES MONSTROUS VERDICT

Summary of West German Proceedings Against the Communist Party

1951

November 23rd: The West German Government filed an application with the West German Constitutional Court, asking for the banning of the Communist Party. The application was based upon Article 21 of the West German Constitution, which states: "Parties which have the aim of.... limiting or removing the free-democratic basic order, or of endangering the existence of the Federal Republic, are unconstitutional."

1952

January 31st: Police raided Communist Party offices and the homes of leading Communists throughout West Germany, seizing tons of files, newspapers, etc.

1953

Government jurists studied the "evidence", working hard to frame a case against the Communist Party. Throughout the year individual Communists, numbering thousands, were harried by police searches and bans. Hundreds were imprisoned for speaking and acting against West German remilitarisation.

1954

November 23rd: Exactly three years after filing the first application for the ban, government attorneys took the case into court.

1955

July 15th: The trial ended after 51 days of legal proceedings spread over nearly eight months. The court reserved its verdict for a later date.

1956

August 17th: After deliberating for thirteen months, the court delivered its verdict, banning the Communist Party.

THE MEN BEHIND THE BAN

Dr Robert Lehr, West German Minister of the Interior from 1950—1953 who originally filed the ban application in November 1951. Dr Lehr, a member of Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democratic Party, is an old German right-wing nationalist police official. Under Kaiser Wilhelm he served in the political police in Dusseldorf, and in his own words "my biggest job was in the fight against the radical movement, against Anarchists and Syndicalists, Independent Socialists and against the Spartacus movement". After Hitler came to power in 1933, Dr Lehr, then Lord Mayor of Dusseldorf, personally signed orders for the first anti-Semitic measures in that city. In 1938 the nazi city council granted him the freedom of the city.

* * *

Gerhard Schroeder, West German Minister of the Interior since 1953, who organised the police raids and arrests after the banning of the Communist Party. Herr Schroeder is a lawyer by profession who became an officer in Hitler's brown-shirted SA in 1933, and was later legal adviser to war criminal Hjalmar Schacht.

Dr Josef Wintrich, President of the West German Constitutional Court which pronounced the ban on the Communist Party on August 17th 1956. Dr Wintrich served in nazi courts throughout the Hitler period as a state prosecutor. In 1940, when he was proposed for promotion to the post of senior prosecutor, the Bavarian branch of the nazi party certified his "undoubtedly National Socialist attitude".

* * *

Judge Franz Wessel, one of the board of judges which promulgated the ban on the Communist Party. Dr Wessel served as a "Regierungsdirektor", a high civil service rank, with the nazi occupation authorities in Cracow, Poland.

* * *

State Secretary Hans Ritter von Lex, of the West German Ministry of the Interior, chief government attorney in the case against the Communist Pary. In 1933, when he was a member of the Reichstag, he voted in favour of full plenary powers for Hitler. Throughout the nazi period he served Hitler's regime as a high-ranking civil servant in the Ministry of the Interior.

HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD BOOK USED TO BAN COMMUNIST PARTY

Police Roundups Start In West Germany

The West German authorities banned the Communist Party of Germany on August 17th 1956, 23 years after it had been banned by Hitler.

The ban was pronounced by the West German Constitutional Court after proceedings lasting nearly five years. The court judgment stated openly that the ban was based upon the fact that the Communist Party founded its political theory upon the "Communist Manifesto", written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and first published in London in February 1848, one hundred and eight years ago.

(The "Communist Manifesto", the first clear formulation of the principles of scientific socialism, was republished in a large edition in London by the British Labour Party, then the government party, in 1948, the centenary of its first publication.)

The court judgment stated:

"1. The Communist Party of Germany is unconstitutional.

2. The Communist Party of Germany is herewith dissolved.

3. It is forbidden to create substitute organisations in place of the Communist Party of Germany, or to continue with existing organisations as substitute organisations.

4. The property of the Communist Party of Germany is sequestered by the Federal Republic of Germany."

The full text of the court decision banning the Communist Party ran to 450 typewritten pages. The judgment made no allegation that the Communist Party had actually used any form of subversion or force in an attempt to overthrow the existing order in West Germany; it confined itself to the attempt to prove that Marxism as a political theory is fundamentally incompatible with the "free democratic order" existing in West Germany, and therefore ipso facto unconstitutional.

The judgment stated: "Scientific socialism is a theory mainly developed by Marx; its basis as a call to the proletariat for class consciousness and for political action on an international basis was worked out by Marx and Engels in the 'Communist Manifesto' in 1848."

The court ruled that the Communist Party must be banned under Article 21 of the West German Constitution, which rules that parties are unconstitutional if they "have the aim of limiting or removing the free-democratic basic order". The judgment hinted that this clause of the constitution might be used at a future date against other parties, stating "classical democratic parties are not immune from proceedings under this clause."

The court was forced to admit that the ban on the Communist Party would place the Communist Party at a disadvantage if all-German elections were arranged: "There can be no doubt that the ban will place the Communist Party in an unfavourable position compared to the other parties when the time comes for the preparation of all-German elections". The court claimed, however, that this would not cause an insuperable obstacle to the holding of all-German elections.

* * *

Immediately after the announcement by the Karlsruhe court that the Communist Party had been banned, thousands of West German police went into action to raid Communist Party offices, search the homes of leading Communists, and close down Communist newspapers.

Several hundreds of Communist Party members and officials were immediately arrested, most of them being released provisionally after they had been finger-printed and photographed. Thirteen daily newspapers issued by the Communist Party were closed down, and seven other periodicals also banned.

More than 300 Communists, elected by voters to serve on district councils, were summarily excluded from office in the province of North Rhine Westphalia alone, and proceedings were

"THE POLICE ARE HERE!"

Dramatic Last Messages From West German Editorial Offices

On the morning of August 17th, immediately after the West German Constitutional Court had banned the Communist Party, police squads swung into action against the editorial offices of the thirteen Communist daily newspapers published in West Germany.

As the police went into action, reporters in these offices tapped out a minute report over the teleprinter to the editorial offices of "Neues Deutschland", central organ of the Socialist Unity Party in East Berlin. Here are extracts from these last messages transmitted legally by these West German Communist journalists:

From "Freies Volk", Dusseldorf

The coppers haven't arrived yet, so we can still send you a few lines... We have hung out red flags, and a banner saying "Despite the ban the C.P. lives"...

Now the police are here, we shall have to stop...

Stay at the machine, I shall go on writing as long as I can...

At the moment the police are in the yard: the first protectors of liberty are making themselves comfortable all over the place...

These will probably have to be the last sentences. About one hundred mobile police in the courtyard. We shall keep sending until the last minute...

The editorial office has been occupied by police. Long live the Communist Party of Germany!

* * *

From "Niedersaechsische Volksstimme", Hanover

We are occupied already. Police are in the office...

They are going to seal the building... Two members of the staff already arrested... (The message broke off in the middle of a sentence).

* * *

From "Hamburger Volkszeitung", Hamburg

Party headquarters and our print shop already occupied: our offices not yet. Police expected any moment. Probably our last message... Police have arrived.

begun to expel the Communist members of the provincial parliaments of Lower Saxony and Bremen.

The police action meant that the 611,000 West German voters who had voted for the Communist Party at the last general election in 1953 were disfranchised and deprived of the right to vote for the candidates of their choice at the general election scheduled for next year.

Police action was not confined to Communist Party offices and the homes of Communist Party members. In a number of cities raids and searches were also staged in the offices of such organisations as the "Association of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime", and the progressive middle-class party "League of Germans".

At a press conference in Bonn on August 17th, West German Minister of the Interior Gerhard Schroeder declared there would be no "witch-hunt" of ordinary Communist Party members, but he foreshadowed a campaign against Communist leaders. "The Federal Government is interested in immobilising the main officials and men behind the scenes" he stated. Minister Schroeder did not define what he understood under the term "immobilising".

"We have no intention of taking proceedings against the little members of the Communist Party, so long as they obey the court order banning the Party" he said. "These little members are misled workers who have fallen victim to hate propaganda, old age pensioners whom the Communists have promised mountains of gold, young people actuated by a spirit of adventure, and a few artists and intellectuals who have fallen victim to the lures of dialectical materialism" Minister Schroeder stated.

The Government ban on the Communist Party in West Germany has led to serious uneasiness in Social Democratic and liberal quarters there. The "Vorwaerts", organ of the Central Board of the Social Democratic Party, commented on August 17th:

"The ban (on the Communist Party) has made questionable the legal security of all political parties in the democratic state ... It could be used as a weapon to slander and persecute anyone who did not agree with the foreign policy and defence policy of the Adenauer Government, on the grounds that they had been infiltrated by the Communists."

The influential Munich liberal newspaper "Sueddeutsche Zeitung" stated on August 18th:

"The ban on the Communist Party ... threatens all those uncomfortable elements who may themselves be miles away from Communism, but whose arguments, perhaps on the questions of conscription or conscientious objection, have some apparent similarity with the arguments used by the Communists. If steps are not taken promptly we may face a situation in which anyone who is not completely orthodox may find himself denounced as a Communist."

CLANDESTINE PRESSES ROLL AGAIN

First Underground Newspaper Appears

Communists in West Germany, who did not allow Hitler to gag them, are not allowing Adenauer to do it either. Less than a week after West German police had raided and sealed all Communist newspaper offices, the first copies of the clandestine edition of "Freies Volk", the central organ of the Communist Party, were getting to their readers in West German factories and homes.

Main feature of the first underground issue of the newspaper was a declaration made by the Central Board of the Communist Party in answer to the Adenauer ban. The declaration stated in part:

"Under pressure from the Adenauer regime, the Constitutional Court has banned the Communist Party, and ordered the police to dissolve it.

"The Communist Party is a fact and will remain a fact ... The ban on the Communist Party, a German democratic party, shows how democracy is trampled underfoot in the Federal Republic ... By banning the Communist Party the Adenauer Government has become the most reactionary government in Europe.

"At this hour of danger the Communist Party appeals for unity of action of the working class, and the cooperation of all decent popular forces against German militarism and monopoly capitalism.

"The Communist Party lives, and will stand in the first ranks of the working class and the people when the Adenauer era is only a memory. Now, comrades and friends, forward to new struggles! Forwards with the Communist Party of Germany against militarism and reaction, for democracy and socialism!"

Leniency — For Neo-Nazis Only

"The Communists are now in the company of the former Socialist Reich Party, a neo-Nazi group, which was banned in October 1952... The leaders of the banned S.R.P. are still unashamedly vocal. But any leniency shown to them need not be taken as a precedent for the treatment of Communists."

"The Times", London, August 18th 1956

"AID BANNED PARTY"

Socialist Unity Appeal

It is an honourable duty for all members of the German working class to aid and protect every Communist threatened by Adenauer's ban, the Socialist Unity Party, biggest party of the German Democratic Republic, declared on August 25th.

"The workers of West Germany will help to spread the words of the suppressed Communist Party" the declaration stated.

"In this situation the Social Democratic Party, the only remaining legal working class party in West Germany, has a great responsibility. The banning of the Communist Party could have been prevented if the leadership of the Social Democratic Party and the West German Trade Union Federation had given their aid. Now every German worker and democrat sees that the policy of the cold war, the policy of hate propaganda against the German Democratic Republic, and the policy of anti-Communism lead to a pestilential atmosphere in which reaction, militarism and fascism can grow rapidly.

"The Conscription Law and the banning of the Communist Party show clearly that the Adenauer Government fears the idea of a peaceful contest between the two German states, the idea proposed by the Socialist Unity Party and the German Democratic Republic."

Only 5% Want to be Soldiers

Only five percent of all West German men would willingly serve in the new Wehrmacht, a public opinion poll just held in West Germany by the EMNID Institute has disclosed. A further 27% regard military service as an unavoidable duty, and 65% of the representative sample queried replied they would serve very unwillingly, or would refuse to serve.

BERTOLT BRECHT 1898–1956

Great Man – Great Poet – Great Socialist

A great man, a great poet and a great socialist died in Berlin on August 14th.

From Charlie Chaplin came a telegram of condolence: "I am shocked by the sudden death of my friend Bertolt Brecht. Germany has lost her greatest poet and dramatist, a man whose genius was recognised in the theatres of the whole world." Other messages of warm human sympathy came from outstanding world citizens such as Pablo Picasso and Ilya Ehrenburg.

The obituary notices in newspapers in both halves of Germany, and in such varied newspapers as the "Times" of London, "The New York Times", and "Pravda" were full of words and phrases such as "genius" and "Germany's greatest dramatist". At a memorial meeting in Berlin famed Hungarian critic Georg Lukacs coupled Brecht's name with the names of Chekhov, Ibsen and Shaw.

Many of the memorial notices in Germany and elsewhere went further and described Brecht as the greatest man of letters of the present age.

Very many of the readers of GERMAN REPORT, perhaps the majority, will have to take these statements on trust. They have never read one of Brecht's poems, they have never seen one of his plays; for very few of Brecht's works are available in adequate English translations, and it is only in the past two or three years that any of his great plays have been performed professionally in the English-speaking world.

Perhaps without knowing it they have heard or sung some of his songs, though. Many of them know the hit song "Mack the Knife", popularised recently by Louis Armstrong. Brecht wrote the words for this song, the theme song of the "Threepenny Opera", an adaptation of Gay's "Beggar's Opera" first performed in Berlin in 1928, and recently presented with great success in New York and London.

Many of them saw the anti-nazi film "Hangmen Also Die", for which Brecht wrote the script when he was living in Hollywood, a refugee from nazi oppression, during the Second World War.

And many of the older readers of GERMAN REPORT certainly remember the song they used to sing in the thirties:

"A man is only human,
He must eat before he can think,
The emancipation of the working class
Is a matter of food and drink.
Then left, right, left
Then left, right, left
There's a job that we must do
Join with us in the workers' united front
For you are a worker too."

This song, with its simple text by Brecht and its stirring music by composer Hanns Eisler, was sung in dozens of languages by workers in demonstrations against fascism and war all over the world in the 1930's; it was sung in Spain by the soldiers of the Spanish Republican Army and the soldiers of the International Brigades.

Who was Bertolt Brecht, and what was his work? Born in Augsburg in 1898, he studied medicine and natural sciences. In the last years of the First World War he began to write. One of his first poems, the "Song of the Dead Soldier" is typical of his whole work: a biting attack on militarism and war.

But he did not confine himself to artistic opposition. Already a socialist, the young Brecht became a member of the short-lived "Workers' and Soldiers' Council", which assumed authority in his home town of Augsburg for a short period in November 1918.

In the following years, he learned and wrote: stories, poems, songs and plays streamed from his pen; they were shouts of protest, but such gifted shouts of protest that even the bourgeois society of the Weimar Republic was forced to recognise his gifts. His poems were printed, his songs were sung, and his plays were produced.

But protesting and criticising was not enough for Brecht. He knew that the world must be changed, and he put all his artistic gifts at the disposal of the workers' movement to help change the world.

After his enormous success with the "Threepenny Opera", Brecht threw all his great abilities on the side of the militant socialist movement. In 1932 he produced in Berlin "Mother", a play based upon Maxim Gorki's great novel of the same name. The play was given its premiere on the 13th anniversary of the murder of Rosa Luxemburg, the great revolutionary, and Brecht himself said that this play was intended to teach the revolutionary proletariat of Germany, by artistic means, "a certain specific practical conduct aimed at changing the world".

Brecht's "Mother" is a propaganda play: a text book for socialist revolution. But it is also, what propaganda so rarely is, a great work of art.

It was the last play which Brecht could produce on the German stage for many years. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Brecht was high on the list of "dangerous reds", and like so many others he was forced to emigrate. He spent the years of the Hitler terror in Scandinavia and later in the United States. All the time he learned and he wrote, against fascism and war, and for socialism and a better world.

When the fascists attacked in Spain, Brecht fought them with his weapon, the pen, and wrote "Senora Carrar's Rifles", a wonderful short play for the Spanish Republic which some English readers may have seen in an amateur production in London in 1937.

He saw the war coming, and gave his warning. In his "German Marginal Notes" written in 1938 we find this epigram:

It is night.
The young couples
Lie in bed. The young women
Will bear orphans.

And war came. From his exile in the United States, Brecht sent his messages and his warnings, in the form of songs and poems, to his compatriots in Germany.

One of his poems, written in 1942, which was repeatedly used by allied broadcasting stations in their transmissions to Germany, told of the presents which the wife of the German soldier was receiving from all over Europe: shoes from Prague, a blouse from Warsaw, lace from Belgium, and a silk dress from Paris. And then came the final gift:

And what did the soldier's wife
receive
From the spacious Russian land?
From Russia she got her widow's
black,
For the funeral wake her widow's
black.
That came from the Russian land.

In 1947, like so many artists of integrity living in the United States, Bertolt Brecht was brought to testify before the Un-American Activities Committee in that Committee's investigation of "subversive, Communist and un-American influences in motion pictures".

At his hearing in Washington on October 30th 1947, Brecht, like most other persons who have had the misfortune to appear before the Committee, was harried by the Chairman, at that time the notorious J. Parnell Thomas. The Committee refused to allow Brecht to read the statement which he had prepared. A few extracts from his statement are given here:

"In the second half of the 1920's the old reactionary militarist forces began to regain strength (in Germany) ... Voices could already be heard demanding that free artistic expression and free speech should be silenced. Humanist, socialist, even Christian ideas were called 'undeutsch' (un-German), a word which I can hardly think of without Hitler's wolfish intonation ... I started writing some poems, songs and plays reflecting the feelings of the people and attacking their enemies who now openly marched under the swastika of Adolf Hitler.

"The persecutions in the field of culture increased gradually ... At the universities, political witch hunts were staged, and campaigns were waged against motion pictures such as 'All Quiet on the Western Front' ...

"At the beginning, only a very few people were capable of seeing the connection between the reactionary restrictions in the field of culture and the ultimate assaults upon the physical life of a people itself ... I suppose that some poems and plays of mine, written during this period of the fight against Hitler, have moved the Un-American Activities Committee to subpoena me ...

"Being called before the Un-American Activities Committee, however, I feel free for the first time to say a few words about American

GENERAL, YOUR TANK IS STRONG

By Bertolt Brecht (1938)

General, your tank is strong
It smashes a forest and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one fault:
It needs a driver.

General, your bomber is strong
It flies swifter than the storm, and carries more than an elephant.
But it has one fault:
It needs an engineer.

General, man is very usable.
He can fly, and he can kill.
But he has one fault:
He can think.

matters: looking back at my experiences as a playwright and a poet in the Europe of the last two decades, I wish to say that the great American people would lose much and risk much if they allowed anybody to restrict free competition of ideas in cultural fields, or to interfere with art, which must be free in order to be art. We are living in a dangerous world. Our state of civilisation is such that mankind is already capable of becoming enormously wealthy, but, as a whole, is still poverty-ridden. Great wars have been suffered, greater ones are imminent, we are told. One of them might well wipe out mankind as a whole. We might be the last generation of the human species on this earth.

"The ideas about how to make use of the new capabilities of production have not been developed much since the days when the horse had to do what man could not do. Do you not think that, in such a situation, every new idea should be examined carefully and freely?"

It is easy to see why the Committee did not allow Bertolt Brecht to read his statement, with its implicit parallels between the witch-hunt in nazi Germany, and the witch hunt in another country at a later date.

Soon after his experience before J. Parnell Thomas' Committee, Brecht left the United States, and returned to Germany, where he settled in East Berlin, the capital of the German Democratic Republic.

Here he established the "Berliner Ensemble", a theatrical group which in the course of the past eight years has developed into what is today almost undoubtedly the best theatre in Europe.

With the "Berliner Ensemble", led by his actress wife Helene Weigel, Brecht was able to develope to the full all his theories of acting and the modern theatre, theories which serious critics have described as the most revolutionary event in dramatic form since Aristoteles laid the foundations of classical dramatic form in the fourth century B. C.

Here, in his own theatre, Brecht was able to stage in their full perfection such of his works as "Mother Courage", an epic anti-war play; "Squire Puntila and his Man Matti"; and "The Caucasian Chalk Circle".

In addition the theatre staged adaptations in the Brecht style of Synge's "Playboy of the Western World"; George Farquar's "Recruiting Officer" and many other first class plays.

May Day 1954. Bertolt Brecht and his wife Helene Weigel on the float of the Berliner Ensemble in the Berlin May Day demonstration

The standard attained by these productions is shown by the fact that a few months ago the dramatic critic of the London "Observer" suggested that it was well worth flying from London to Berlin in order to see one performance in Brecht's own theatre.

One of the reasons for Brecht's success and his international fame was his great ability; but the other reason was undoubtedly his almost infinite capacity for hard work. He was a perfectionist, filing and rewriting his plays and poems until he was quite sure there was nothing more to be done; and rehearsing and re-rehearsing his productions on the stage until every word and action was not simply satisfactory but absolutely right.

Brecht was a socialist and humanist, and one of the points of his theory of "epic theatre" was that the plays presented in this style were intended to "awaken the spectator to activity, and force him to take a decision". This may sound dull and "propagandist" to those who have never experienced a Brecht play, but Brecht was not only a teacher and theorist; he was a great dramatist too.

He knew that if he was going to teach people he had to get them into the theatre first, and interest them, thrill them, and if need be amuse them too. And this he did in full measure: almost every one of his plays is more packed with excitement than a thriller, and with a fair share of farce and knock-about comedy.

The high-brows and egg-heads in various lands have tried to claim Brecht as their own; he has become "fashionable" in various intellectual circles. But he did not write his plays and his poems for them: he wrote them for everyone, for all the men and women in the world who want to make the world a better place to live in.

Brecht summed up his philosophy in the closing lines of the "Caucasian Chalk Circle", the last play of his which he lived to produce:

"Children to the motherly, so that they grow up healthy.

Waggons to good drivers, so that they be properly driven.

And the valley to the irrigators, so that it bring forth fruit."

EAST GERMAN HOLIDAY

Impressions of a Four-Week Stay

By Angela Tuckett, London

We have just returned from an intensely interesting four weeks' holiday in the German Democratic Republic. This was no study delegation; we were just holiday-makers — four men and two women, three of us in the printing industry, the others a painter, a miner and a woman organiser. But even on holiday ordinary folk can't go about with their eyes shut. We saw plenty and plenty happened to us.

Most of our time was spent in the lovely holiday country of the Thuringian Forest — rolling hills covered with Christmas trees, with historic country capitals and market towns sunning themselves in the valleys between. It is as though Cotswold villages and the Scottish Highlands all moved to North Wales and met a dash of the Lake District there.

We had a grand holiday with every variety of occupation, place and people to meet. But we were especially lucky because the visit happened to coincide with several unlooked-for events.

Take the day we visited Buchenwald concentration camp outside Weimar — a visit which in itself makes a whole story none of us will ever forget. We came straight from that place of mass murder to find ourselves in the midst of a major historical and political event. It was June 21st; and the Red Army contingent was to entrain from Weimar, as part of the withdrawal of 33,500 Soviet occupation troops, the announcement of which had started the world press agencies buzzing.

When we came into this small but venerable city, home of Goethe and Schiller and packed with history, we found the streets crowded. People were streaming in from neighbouring villages: family parties, youth organisations, factory and trade union contingents, with bands and flags — all to take part in farewell celebrations and to see the Red Army off.

From many windows flags were flying, mostly the flag of the German Democratic Republic, but also Friendship banners and slogans. Everyone made for the sports ground for the farewell celebrations, music, parades and speeches.

Late in the afternoon, the Red Army units marched out towards the station, escorted by detachments of the German Democratic Army and the factory Home Guard, in their "hospital blue" uniforms and armbands, straight from work. Falling in behind came the whole population, men, women and children — and of course the six Britishers couldn't resist joining in. When the long train drew out, the Red Army boys were grinning broadly as they set out most willingly for home, waving the bouquets of flowers they had been given, each Army cook flourishing his chef's hat. And the whole town waved back.

The next big occasion was of a very different kind — but none the less interesting. On June 30th we found ourselves right in the middle of great celebrations in the small country town which was our headquarters, the ten-year anniversary of the nationalisation of industry; a "mixed economy" — 85 per cent nationalised, 15 per cent privately owned. A nice proportion, we thought; and not the "mixture as before" by any means. We were determined to be in on this too.

Before we knew where we were, Bill and Jean found themselves invited to the local porcelain factory. Here Bill the miner, the only one amongst us who was "nationalised", started the day by making a speech. Not outside the gates or at the pithead, to which he was accustomed, but in the factory dining hall.

This Saturday at home in the Midlands, thousands of engineers in the motor industry were facing their first weekend of unemployment. The contrast was much in our thoughts, and it gave a serious slant to Bill's speech. For in East Germany increasing mechanisation and automation could bring nothing but a higher standard of living for all; a blessing and not a curse. Yet the shadow cast on our spirits by what was happening at home did not make us the less able to share in celebrating the successes in Thuringia; perhaps it gave us a deeper sense of appreciation.

Yet this was only the beginning of a big day. After speeches by local trade unionists in the sunny square, packed with people, the children bobbing around the band and a pleasantly informal atmosphere, we went off to visit an exhibition of local industries — mostly glass and china ware, woodwork, furniture and light engineering.

Then that evening there was a slap-up do in a vast new hall, with singing, folkdancing, bands of traditional local musical instruments, yodelling, plenty of beer and bonhomie. When the population began to dance, some weaker spirits amongst us got crowded off the dance floor — to join the more sedate citizens at the side tables, for beer or schnaps. Very reluctantly we left the town party still in full swing at midnight — keenly conscious that the night and the Republic were still young.

For the following weekend we found that the Presse Fest was being celebrated in the nearby town of Suhl.

Win a New Reader

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This is a special day throughout the Republic in honour of the democratic press; you might call it a People's Press Gala Weekend. A full cultural programme of musical concerts of all kinds, dancing exhibitions and general jollification. Here we three printing trade workers were particularly pleased to make the acquaintance of our local opposite numbers. And that led to our going all over the local publishing works and taking a good look at the print shop. Luckily it was a quiet moment, with most pages already made up for the next issue. We had scope to look around, nod familiarly to our old friends the linotype machines, and do the rounds thoroughly.

The machines and the rotary were not of the newest, but they compare favourably with the last provincial printshop I saw in England; and as for the building layout and working conditions — these were really lush! The world over, whatever the day, there will always be some poor comps and journalists on the working turn — and so it was in Suhl that day. And the same old litter of empty cups and jugs, duty rotas and comic cuttings on the wall. Ernie, Leo and I felt much at home as our German print colleagues in all departments made us welcome. Only — where was the guv'nor, and the pages of display advertisement "musts"? Somehow not much in evidence.

And the parting words: "What about a story from Britain sometime? We'll give the whole of page 5 and welcome!" We would have liked to return the compliment; only we don't yet own the British Press.

To tell the rest would take many pages. So I say nothing of dropping in on a cooperative farm, or an entrancing morning going over the toy museum of Sonneberg — toys down the ages, of all countries, many of them fine works of art. Or of the typewriter factory where the former administration buildings had been converted into a splendidly equipped hospital for the workers and their families — making preventive medicine a pleasure.

During our month's holiday we saw 9 or 10 films. They included a lighthearted Hungarian comedy, a modern Czech drama and a Russian film based on a story by Chekhov. But I think the German films interested us most, amongst them "The Condemned Village", which some film societies have been showing in England.

We were impressed by the powerful "Devil's Circle" about the Reichstag Fire Trial, with a fine portrayal of Dimitroff. We found most moving "Stronger Than the Night", an account of the underground resistance inside Germany from Hitler's coming to power to his end, fictional but based on exact research. Strongest of all was the coloured two-part film on Ernst Thaelmann. None of these have been seen in Britain. (Why not, we asked ourselves, coming back to a Britain where the BBC is trying to build up the 1944 General's Revolt as the only resistance to Hitler?)

There was a happy sequel to this. For on our plane home we met "Thaelmann" himself, on his way to the Karlovy Vary Film Festival. Gunther Simon, the young ex-POW from Nottingham, gives a fine dignified performance as the great Hamburg docker. He told us how he had spent three years studying all the records, letters, speeches of Thaelmann before playing the part. Being a youngster and brought up under Hitler, he had never known the facts. Clearly it was not for his broad shoulders alone that Simon had been cast for this part. (Thaelmann was said to have had shoulders a yard wide.) A fortunate young man, to be able to put his talents to the service of his people, and work at his art without the commercial exploitation and ballyhoo of Hollywood and points nearer home.

We had only four days in Berlin, coming and going. During this time we went to two operas, the circus, the vast Marx-Engels Institute, met some leading trade unionists, visited the Children's Republic Park, made a lovely boat trip on the Mueggelsee Lake and went to the historic palace where the Potsdam Conference between the three Powers took place.

On top of this some of us went out dancing, some shopping in Stalin Allee and others prowled greedily through the bookshops — according to taste. Not much time, but just enough to give us ideas of what we wanted to see next time we visit Berlin.

14,000 TANKS FOR NEW WEHRMACHT

The West German War Ministry has ordered a total of 14,682 armoured vehicles and tanks for the new Wehrmacht, the West German newspaper "Die Welt" reported on August 21st. The new Wehrmacht ist scheduled to consist of 12 divisions; the great number of tanks ordered means that each division will be equipped with an average of 1200 tanks, or about one tank for each twelve soldiers. Military experts estimated that this was a higher degree of mechanisation than in any other army in the world.

Many of Hitler's plane makers are now back at work again making planes for the new West German Luftwaffe, according to reports from Bonn. The "Times", London, reported on August 22nd that the Fokker-Wulf concern at Bremen is now at work on an order for 194 Italian-designed trainers, and the Messerschmitt and Heinkel concerns are building 360 French designed jet planes.

The Weser Aircraft Company is building 696 jet bombers of the US type F 84, the West German news agency reported on August 23rd. Taken together, these reports show that 1826 planes have now been ordered by the Luftwaffe from German plane makers: this is more than the total strength of the British RAF at the outbreak of World War Two.

Efforts are now being made in the West German capital of Bonn to increase the 500,000 man target strength of the new West German Wehrmacht, the conservative West Berlin newspaper "Tagesspiegel" reported on August 24th. "If the British and the Americans withdraw noticeable quantities of troops from the continent, then the Federal Army must be increased above the figure of 500,000, military circles in Bonn feel", the newspaper reported.

(The German Democratic Republic recently reduced the target strength for its armed forces from the original figure of 120,000 to a new lower figure of 90,000. The Government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly called for East-West discussions on the limitation of armed forces in both parts of Germany, and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from both parts of Germany.)

Thirty Countries at Leipzig

Seven thousand exhibitors from 30 different countries will show their goods at the Leipzig Sample Fair in September, it was announced in Berlin. 1200 different firms from West Germany have already booked exhibition space at the fair. Fair visitors from western countries will be able to change their pounds and dollars at a special concessional rate about double the usual exchange rate.

HOME FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

By Joan Becker

I spent a long summer day at Königsheide — King's Heath — one of the newest and biggest children's homes in Berlin — but even so did not have time to go over all of its thirteen long, low, two-storeyed buildings which lie in thirty acres of park, gardens, playgrounds and swimming-pool.

Six hundred orphans and children from asocial homes live here, cared for by a staff of 280. 120 of them are infants and toddlers, 120 of kindergarten age and 340 school children up to 14 and 15.

The director, Herr Riese, showed me over the main buildings; we went first to the clinic and hospital, where I saw fully equipped consulting rooms and dental clinic and bright wards, whose big windows all face south, looking out over trees and lawn. There is a separate corridor and windows on the corridor side too here, for isolation purposes. I looked into the four, three and two-bed sick-rooms with their neat little white beds and white painted furniture, and saw half a dozen small patients with minor ailments.

There is a resident woman children's doctor for the toddlers and kindergarten children and another resident woman doctor looks after the older children; a dentist is there every forenoon and the whole department is directed by the head of Berlin's biggest children's hospital, who makes regular weekly visits.

The whole upper floor of this big L-shaped building belongs to the infants and toddlers. Here again the main rooms face the sun, with huge windows and a broad balcony where babies take their sun-baths and toddlers have their play-pens. Rooms are glassed-in on the inner side here too, and I saw the infants having their two o'clock feed. You could see that they have been a great deal in the sun, for their little faces were pleasantly tanned.

Eighteen qualified children's nurses, with 25 young student nurses, take care of the 120 babies and toddlers here. Herr Riese told me of important improvements to be made in this department. Up to now the Ministry of Health has provided all staff in this department, and it is felt that children's nurses in general lack the necessary psychological and pedagogical training for this special type of work; they deal with their little charges conscientiously, but do not talk or play with them enough, so that when they arrive at kindergarten age their mental development lags definitely behind that of children brought up in a family atmosphere. From now on, the Ministry of Education will step in to help in the mental development of pre-kindergarten children.

We went on to the kindergarten building, where the children are divided into five groups of twenty, each group a self-contained unit with its own trained kindergarten teachers, so that the atmosphere is more that of a larger family. There is a gymnasium for the whole house, very light and airy, with charming children's pictures, a piano, and I noticed in one corner a make-believe shop as big as a small room. We went upstairs and had a look at some of the bedrooms. It was rest-time and as I peeped into one darkened room a little boy was turning somersaults quite quietly on his bed while the others slept peacefully.

The school-age children are in three houses, each house complete in itself except for dining-hall, boys and girls together here too, but with separate bedrooms. I went over one of these, which also contained the library with its 3,000 books and reading-room — a long, pleasant room with gay curtains and pictures and lots of small tables and comfortable chairs. The librarian is a specialist in children's literature. More than half the present staff in charge of school-age children have taken a special three-year course in child care and followed it up by home study for junior teacher's certificate.

The older children all eat together in the big dining-hall, which is also the assembly hall. I had lunch with them there — sitting rather self-consciously on the platform with some of the staff.

As a matter of fact, I did not think very highly of the lunch they gave us — it was one of those rather dull stews with too much cabbage in it — so I made a point of seeing the kitchen. I looked at the menus and saw that there had been full-course lunches with meat, vegetables and pudding or raw or stewed fruit, and often salad in addition, every day for the last fortnight.

The kitchen itself is very impressive — all-electric, with tiled floor and walls, electric refrigerators and a refrigerating room in the cellar beneath. When I got there they were preparing supper, and I watched a girl making butter-pats in a graduated butter-pat machine; the daily ration per child served at the table is 20 grammes for breakfast and 25 grammes for supper (nearly 2 ounces per day). There are rolls and jam and a milk porridge for breakfast and brown bread and butter with sausage, cheese and tomatoes or apples for supper, and coffee with milk to drink. There is always cake for breakfast on Sunday mornings too. Children under six get at least half a pint of fresh milk a day, but the amount for school-age children is to my mind rather small, and there is of course still difficulty, here as elsewhere, in getting enough fresh fruit.

I actually saw hundreds of children, though, who looked extremely fit, for they had just returned from their holidays — the older ones from a tent camp and the younger from a holiday home in the country. Diets are compiled by the Potsdam Food Research Institute and controlled by the Ministry of Health and various committees, including children's committees, for there is a considerable degree of self-government amongst the older children.

The laundry is really something. We walked through the washing-room, with its big drum washing machines, electrically controlled, where the whole process is done in the drum — two soap washings and hot and cold rinsings — simply by turning a lever; past the drying room, at the moment hung with bright yellow woven shirts, and into the electric mangling room. Clothes are colourful but simple, so that practically everything can be mangled. Every bit of washing, including the babies' wash, is done here, so that other staff members need waste no time with it.

Herr Riese also spoke of another change which will be made gradually. It has hitherto been the practice to keep strictly to age groups, as this is simpler in institutional life, and also very successful in the older groups — from 9 to 14 — but the general impression now is that more effort must be made to reproduce something approaching a family atmosphere without interfering too much with school routine.

Two experiments are to be tried, first in the school-age groups; brothers and sisters will be grouped together wherever possible, and there will be other mixed age groups of children who are not related, so as to approach a family atmosphere.

To simplify this there will be some changes in the conditions of admission to Königsheide. The home was completed towards the end of 1952 and the first children to live there were 160 taken over from a transit home set up in 1945 to take care of war orphans and children whose parents could not be found. The former director of this home is now deputy director of Königsheide. Then came children from other homes as well as new admissions, until by 1954 the maximum number of 600 was reached. A few places were open to children whose parents were temporarly unable to make a home for them — because of long illness or important work, for instance.

In future Königsheide will be solely for those who have no homes to go to, ie. orphans or children who have had to be taken away from their homes for social reasons. It will be their real home until they leave primary school, when they get priority in apprentices' and students' hostels, and a special fund for setting them up in life.

Children from Königsheide can also be adopted, and a fulltime social worker, whose initial training is similar to that of an almoner in England, deals with such questions, as well as with the various problems connected with taking children away from undesirable homes.

Königsheide has its own primary school in the grounds, and the parallel training of home personnel makes cooperation with the school easier. This is very important, because most of the children have been more or less mentally handicapped. Of the 100 children who left the home this summer 15 go on to high school, 7 to middle school, 4 girls are entering a junior teachers' training institute, 44 have started 3-year apprentices' courses, and the remaining thirty, who did not pass the school-leaving examination, have all obtained unskilled jobs.

The new regulations on polytechnical education are coming into force here too in September, and the home's patron factory, the Berlin Motor Works, has already equipped a carpenters' and metalworkers' shop in the home for the younger and a special workshop in the motor works itself for the older children.

EAST GERMAN T. U. s CRITICISED

"Look After Workers' Rights"

East German trade union officials have often in the past fallen down on the job of protecting workers' rights, Herbert Warnke, Chairman of the Free German Trade Union Federation, stated in a very critical speech in Berlin on August 22nd.

Herbert Warnke, who was addressing a meeting of the Central Board of the federation, stressed that the central task of the trade unions must remain their care for the working conditions and living standards of the workers. In a socialist state the trade unions also had the very important task of helping to increase production, encourage productivity, and so on, in order to increase the general prosperity of the state and of all workers, but this must not be allowed to divert them from their central task, that of caring for the interests of the workers they represented.

Herbert Warnke recalled that in the early stages of the building of socialism in the Soviet Union, Lenin had drawn attention to the fact that there were bound to be certain differences of opinion on working conditions between the mass of the workers and the directors of the state controlled factories. It was the task of the trade unions to protect the interests of the workers, fight against mistakes and bureaucracy, and to remove causes of conflict at the base.

He quoted examples of factories in the German Democratic Republic where the workers had been justifiably perturbed because of false administrative measures, breaches of the labour law on wage questions, and breaches of the regulations on holidays with pay. Despite these abuses, the local trade union officials had done little or nothing, and had mostly taken the side of the management. Such an attitude on the part of trade union officials could not be tolerated, Herbert Warnke stated.

The meeting of the Central Board of the Trade Union Federation approved a twelve-point plan designed to give more autonomy to the factory trade union committees, and to place upon these committees the responsibility for ensuring the full rights of all unionists.

Democratic Germany Aids Egypt

Democratic Germany is taking all possible steps to extend economic relations with Egypt, in the interest of helping to bring about a peaceful solution of the Suez Canal conflict; it was officially announced in Berlin on August 25th.

An official announcement issued by the Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic stated:

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic believes that all problems in connection with free passage through the Suez Canal can be solved, and must be, solved, by peaceful negotiations with full regard for the sovereign rights of Egypt. As one of the German successor states of one of the signatories to the 1888 Convention, and as one of the users of the Suez Canal the German Democratic Republic is ready to cooperate in any such settlement.

"In the interests of a peaceful solution, the Government of the German Democratic Republic wishes to extend the existing economic relations with Egypt. An examination will be made of all possibilities of extending the existing trade agreement."

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Readers who get bored by history, or learning what Mr Gladstone said in 1875 should stop right here, for it is going to be that sort of column today.

Now that we are alone, let us get out the yellowing volumes, and start digging. When I heard the news of the banning of the Communist Party in West Germany, reported fully on other pages of this issue, I recalled that there had been another court case against the Communist Party in Germany over one hundred years ago, so I started to look up the details.

It was the trial in Cologne of 12 German members of the League of Communists, the first international workers' organisation in history, of which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, had been members. The trial ended with the sentencing of eight of the accused to terms of imprisonment, and the banning of the organisation in Germany.

Karl Marx wrote a book on the trial which was published in Switzerland in 1853. I could not consult the first edition of Marx's book, since the Prussian police seized and destroyed the entire printing of the first edition when it was brought over the frontier into Germany; in a similar way the West German police often seize and destroy Marxist literature imported into their territory today.

But luckily the book was reprinted thirty years later (in German only, as far as I have been able to discover: there never appears to have been an English edition), so I was able to see what Marx himself had to say about this first German ban on the Communist Party, which has been followed in history by a number of other bans.

Parallels

I was immediately struck by an astonishing number of parallels to the long-drawn out legal process, stretching from November 1951 to August 1956, which preceded the latest banning. Marx, commenting on th first trial, stated:

"The documents drawn up by Buerger and Nothjung (two of the accused), and acknowledged by them as genuine, give no proof of any plot; they give no proof of any offence figuring in the penal code; they prove only that the accused are hostile to the existing government and the existing society."

In exactly the same way, the West German Constitutional Court was completely unable to show that the modern Communist Party had committed any offence against the penal code; it could only show that the Communist Party was opposed to the existing West German Government and social order.

And here is a second quotation from Karl Marx, which applies almost word for word to the latest court proceedings over one hundred years later:

"The court proceedings swelled to a gigantic size, owing to the unusual length of the proceedings, the direct intervention of the Ministry in the investigations, the hints about unspeakable horrors, and the boasts about a conspiracy spreading across the map of Europe . . ."

Good Journalist

Incidentally, Marx's book, which is entitled "Revelations About the Communist Trial in Cologne", proves once again to anyone interested that Karl Marx was not only an economist and philosopher of great note, but also a very good journalist. In just over fifty pages he does a first class piece of journalistic detective work, analysing and exposing the whole apparatus of police-spies and stool pigeons which has become familiar in the past few years to anyone who has followed the political trials in the United States.

This short and hard hitting work is another reminder that Marx did not only write weighty tomes like his immense three volume "Capital". Incidentally, evidence has just come to light that Marx originally intended to make "Capital" much shorter and more concise than it finally turned out to be. In a letter written in 1863, recently discovered and published for the first time in the London "Labour Monthly" in August 1956, his wife Jenny wrote:

"His book (Capital) is going forward to completion with giant strides. It would have been ready even earlier if he had kept to the old plan of limiting it to 20—30 printed sheets (some 300 pages). But as the Germans only believe in 'fat' books, and the much finer achievement of concentrating and cutting out all superfluous matter is not appreciated by the worthy folk, Karl has added a lot of historical material, and it will now be a volume of 50 printed sheets that will fall like a bomb on German soil."

(Ninety-four years have passed since this letter was written, but a lot of Germans, in both east and west, still seem to believe today only in 'fat' books, and in speeches lasting a minimum of three hours.)

It has nothing to do with the main question, but while I was burrowing around in the old books, I found some notes by Friedrich Engels on the history of the League of Communists which was on trial in Cologne in 1852. The headquarters of the League were in London, which was at that time a centre for political refugees from all over Europe, and Engels noted that in 1847 one of the people who regularly attended meetings of the League in London was "a British Grenadier Guard in full uniform".

This early British Communist seems to have been overlooked by the historians. I know that some of our readers are interested in the history of socialism in Britain. Have any of them any information on who this Grenadier was, or what became of him later?

And again incidentally, one of the German Communists on trial in Cologne in 1852 was a man named Dr Hermann Becker. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment. After his release from prison he became Lord Mayor of Cologne, and was thus a predecessor of Dr Konrad Adenauer, who was Lord Mayor of Cologne for many years.

Will one of the men banned by Chancellor Adenauer in 1956 finally end up as his successor? It would be a nice twist of history.

Footnote

SS General Kurt Meyer was sentenced to death after the war for shooting 43 Canadian prisoners of war. His sentence was later reduced to 14 years, and in 1954 he was released in West Germany.

The Munich newspaper "Deutsche Woche" now reports that ex-General Meyer is earning his living selling beer to Canadian soldiers stationed in West Germany.

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